

Article - Natural Resources

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§5–1503.

(a) The Department may acquire a conservation easement or a fee simple or other interest in any land described under § 5-1502 of this subtitle.

(b) The Department shall establish criteria for acquisition of conservation easements and of fee simple and other interests in lands, including a priority system that considers:

- (1) The ecological uniqueness of the land;
- (2) The presence of rare, threatened, or endangered plants or animals or diverse communities of plants or animals;
- (3) The threat to the land by development;
- (4) Whether the land is in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area;
- (5) Whether development of the land will adversely impact water quality or unique natural habitat;
- (6) Whether a natural area has been designated by the State or submitted by a county for designation as an area of critical State concern under § 5-611 of the State Finance and Procurement Article; and
- (7) Whether the land is forestland, nontidal wetlands, or tidal wetlands.

(c) The Department annually shall consult with the counties of the State:

- (1) For suggested acquisition of lands; and
- (2) To coordinate the acquisition projects under this subtitle.

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